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AUTHOR Suarez, Cecilia Cota-Robles
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ABSTRACT

Linguistically and culturally relevant child care services should be made available for the large population of Hispanic children in the United States. Child care services must be linguistically and culturally relevant because the rejection of first language and culture can hinder the psychological and social development of minority children. One research study indicates that low self- concept among Chicano Spanish-speaking students is related to their school's restriction on speaking Spanish in school. Conversely, another study finds that East Los Angeles Chicano adolescents who identify with the Chicano culture are better adjusted, more adaptive to conflicts and more open-minded. The Hispanic child should not be subjected to a hostile child care program, such as one based in deprived model theory. The predominant theory used in early childhood education programs for minority children, the deprived model assumes that low-income or minority children have deficient home experiences and supports the notion that the minority child is incapable of functioning adequately in an educational setting. A bilingual, culturally relevant child care environment based on children's needs, interests, culture and language should be provided for the Hispanic child. (At the conclusion of this argument six recommendations for the provision of child care to Hispanic children are offered.) (Author/RH)

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TESTIMONY TO: CALIFORNIA GOVERNOR'S ADVISORY COUNCIL ON CHILD DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS - BILINGUAL/BICULTURAL EDUCATION, LOS ANGELES, CALIFORNIA, FEBRUARY 14, 1981

DELIVERED BY:

CECILIA COTA-ROBLES SUAREZ, ED.D.
COORDINATOR, EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION
CALIFORNIA STATE POLYTECHNIC UNIVERSITY, POMONA

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Cecilia Cota-Robles Suarez

TO THE EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES INFORMATION CENTER (ERIC)."

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> You tell me that I am a criminal. You say that I am no good. You say that I should be like you, so that I may be a good citizen. I had been told the following things all my life. My teacher didn't want me to speak Spanish, because it was bad. I was told I should not speak Spanish because it was bad. I was told not to be so loyal to my friends because it was bad. I was told I should not be so clannish because it was not the American way.
>
> I speak only English; I am no longer a Catholic; I have quit being loyal to my friends; I am no longer clannish. I have changed everything but the color of my skin.
>
> And what have I become? I am a grown man who has no belief in God, who cannot speak in his parent's language, who has become a traitor to his friends, and am now an outcast to my people.
>
> I have tried to be like you. And now you tell me I am a criminal. Isn't that what you wanted? (Estrada, 1970, p.2).

The above is entitled "An Open Letter to Society." Chato Estrada, a Chicano prisoner, described how he felt about himself after trying to change to the dominant society's norms. As indicated by Estrada, someone who has been rejected and discriminated against will develop ego defenses to combat this abusive behavior. The type of defenses used by a person who has been discriminated against will depend upon one's lifestyle and how severe the prejudicial treatment has been. Major effect of racial prejudice has been determined as being: 1) obsessive concern, 2) denial of membership, 3) withdrawal, 4) passivity, 5) clowning, 6) self-hatred, and group solidarity (Cota-Robles de Suarez, 1971). Scholars, such as UCLA psychiatric social worker Armando Morales, contend that social problems in the Chicano community are caused by the racism of the dominant society against the Chicano (Morales, 1976).

In a historical account of American education, Katz (1975) concluded that racial prejudice was part of the origins of American education. Racism, according to Katz, became functional as the defense for the failure of children who did not fit the white, middle class English-speaking mold. By insisting that all children fit a certain mold, the schools then wash their hands of the responsibility of successfully educating the minority child. This concept is inherent

in the deprived model theory. The deprived model designated that the low-income or minority child has deficient home experiences, in contrast to the middle-income English-speaking Anglo child. Proponents of the deprived model contend that qualitative and quantitative sub-standard experiences contribute to the child's developmental deficiencies (supposed, that is) which supposedly hinder cognitive, linguistic, and motivational growth (Deutsch, 1964, Hess and Shipman, 1968, Hunt 1966). The deprived model has been the predominant theory used in early childhood education programs for minority children (Evans, 1975). In this type of program, the language and culture of the minority child is determined as being deficient, thus supporting the notion that the child is incapable of functioning adequately in an educational setting. The implementation of programs utilizing the deprived model has resulted in rejection, rather than acceptance of the minority child.

When the dominant group speaks one language and a minority group speaks another, the language of the dominant group becomes the language of the institutions, thereby being the symbol of status. But if a person speaks a language other than the dominant one, and is struggling to learn this second language, a conflict may arise. The conflict may be internalized, leaving a mark on the person's socio-emotional adjustment. If the person is forced to reject her/his home language, due to pressures from the dominant society, this may cause psychological damage to the person. If the person is young, the tensions produced by negating one's language may have adverse effects upon the person's emotional and social development.

If the child is a child care situation in which the staff does not speak Spanish, the her/his basic needs cannot be met. The effects of this treatment can be immediate and severe, for culture and language are at the core of a person's self concept. The language and culture carry overtones of one's family, home, and community. "We all love to be addressed...en la lengua que mamamos (in the language we suckled)" (Sanchez, 1966, p. 16).

Studies have found that the insistence of making the Chicana(o) change her/his language and culture has had severe effects on the person. For instance, one study found that East Los Angeles adolescents who identified with the Chicano culture were better adjusted, more adaptive to conflicts and were more open-minded (Derbyshire, 1965). In another study, Ramirez (1973) concluded that the Anglicized students were having conflicts with their parents, but having good personal relationships outside the home. Those who identified with Chicano values had good relationships with their parents, but felt alienated from the outside world.

The National Education Association (1966) in its study of Spanish-speaking students in the Southwest, cited the school's treatment of the Chicano Spanish-speaking as the cause of the students low self-concept. In telling the Spanish-speaking student not to speak her/his home language in school, the school has told the child that her/his language and culture are of no worth, that the people who speak Spanish are of no worth, and that the child is of no worth (National Education Association, 1966). Therefore, a negative self-concept can be developed by the child because of the school's rejection of the child's language and culture.

Let's look at some statistics of the Hispanic, which includes the Chicano. Of every 18 persons in the United States, one is of Hispanic descent. In 1978, over 12 million persons were reported to be Hispanic. This included 7.2 million Chicanos, 1.8 million Puerto Ricans, and 2.4 million South Americans or Central Americans. The largest concentration of Hispanics are found in the Southwest. The Hispanic is the youngest ethnic group in the United States, with a median of 22 years, compared with 2915 years for the general population. Of the Hispanic group, 12.6% are children under 5 years of age. Nearly half of the Hispanics population (45.9%) are 18 years and under, as compared to 29.6% of the general population.

Hispanic children and adolescents are twice as likely to be in a family of 7 persons or more than the general population. Nearly 38% of Hispanic families having 7 or more family members are below

poverty level. These families will probably live in large urban cities such as Los Angeles. The school districts in the Los Angeles area have documented dramatic Hispanic population increases. For instance, Alhambra School District was 22.3% Hispanic in 1968 and 41.3% Hispanic in 1977; El Rancho School District in Pico Rivera was 60.8% Hispanic in 1968 and 83.2% Hispanic in 1977. Recent predictions of the 1980 Los Angeles County ethnic population divided it into: Anglo 46%, Hispanic 34%, Black 13%, Asian 5%, and other non-white 2% (Turpin, 1981).

These statistics have many implications for education and specifically for child care services for the Hispanic Child. Because of the large number of Hispanics, child care services need to be available to this large and ever-increasing population. But these services need to be linguistically and culturally relevant to the Hispanic. Provisions have to be stipulated. This cannot be left to chance. The Hispanic child should not be subjected to a child care program that is a hostile environment. Because the pre-kindergarten years are formative ones for the child, the first encounter out of the home should not be the beginning of a negative and traumatic school experience. If the child's language and culture are not part of the environment, the child will be lost. S(he) will then be stripped of one of the most important elements in one's life--language and culture. The child will be forced to function in a setting that is based on a different set of values, an alien culture, and an unfamiliar language. Such a beginning can only end in frustration and failure for the child.

In order to present the child from the Hispanic culture with the opportunity to achieve her/his maximum potential, I offer the following recommendations:

1. A bilingual-culturally relevant program should be offered to the Hispanic child based on her/his needs, interests, culture, and language. This means not just speaking to the child in Spanish, but a program that is linguistically and culturally relevant to the child.
2. Provisions should be made by OCD that staff and teachers working in programs serving Hispanic children be trained

so that they can provide a bilingual-bicultural program. Many teachers and staff may be trained in early childhood education, but lack of knowledge in bilingual/bicultural education.

3. OCD should provide funding for curriculum development and the development of instructional materials for bilingual/bicultural programs. Programs fail because there are no provisions for development of curriculum and instructional materials. Provisions need to be made so that the teacher can offer the best program without being confronted with lack of a program and materials to implement it.
4. OCD should provide consultant services to assist programs in providing bilingual/bicultural services. The programs need to have guidance to implement it.
5. OCD should make provisions for on-going evaluations of programs serving hispanic children. The programs not offering adequate bilingual-bicultural programs should be de-funded, or put on probationary status.
6. Priority should be given to the funding of community agencies. Historically large school districts have received the largest share of OCD fundings. Because of their close relationship to the community organizations from these communities should be encouraged, assisted to obtain child care funds.

The Hispanic community has a rich cultural and linguistic heritage. It is not a homogeneous group, but with many variations. Although it is necessary to learn English and function in the ways of the dominant society, the Hispanic child needs to feel that her/his language and culture is of value. This can be done by providing a bilingual-culturally relevant child care environment.

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RATIONALE FOR CULTURALLY AND LINGUISTICALLY RELEVANT EDUCATIONAL SETTING IN EARLY CHILDHOOD EDUCATION

Dr. Cecilia Cota-Robles Suarez, Professor/ECE Coordinator

Provisions for offering services that will meet the linguistic and cultural needs of the child should be an integral part of the child center permit and credential procedures. This cannot be left to chance. The child that comes from a cultural and linguistic background that is different from the English-speaking middle class culture should not be subjected to an early childhood program that is a hostile environment. Because the early years are formative ones, the first encounter out of the home should be a positive and enriching experience--not one that is negative and traumatic. If the child's language and culture are not part of the instructional setting, the child will be lost. This child, whose home and community experiences differ from those of the mainstream culture, will have to face and adapt to an atmosphere that is alien and rejecting. S(he) will then be stripped of one of the most important elements in one's life--language and culture. The child will then have to find her/his way in an educational program that is based on a different set of values, an alien culture, and an unfamiliar language. Such a beginning can only end in frustration or failure for the child.

A culturally and linguistically relevant educational environment needs to be provided for the academic and socio-emotional growth of the child. Studies indicate that the child entering an educational setting with less proficiency in English will become retarded in learning to the extent of the English deficiency, if English is the only medium of instruction. But if the child is presented the mother tongue as a medium of instruction, the child will learn at a normal rate.

Bilingual-bicultural education is a positive reinforcement of the self, the family, the community and the culture, because it utilizes the child's home and language experiences. It will instill intellectual confidence in the child, because success in language learning is assured if it is done in the early years when the learning of language is at its peak. This type of instruction will provide a firm foundation for cognitive and socio-emotional development.

The culturally and linguistically unique child has a rich cultural and linguistic heritage. This heritage is not a homogeneous one, but one with many varieties. Although it is necessary to learn English and to be able to function in the ways of the dominant culture, the culturally and linguistically unique child needs to feel that her/his language and culture is of value. This can be done by providing an educational setting that is culturally and linguistically relevant.